



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
HONOLULU

**GOVERNOR LINDA LINGLE
2006 INAUGURAL ADDRESS
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Aloha and thank you for joining Lieutenant Governor Aiona and me for this inauguration ceremony.

Inaugurations signal that something new is about to begin.

They are ceremonies filled with hope and optimism and a clear outline of the direction we will travel together in the years ahead.

The outline of our journey will be fully colored in over time by the decisions we make and events that occur here at home as well as those occurring elsewhere.

What the final portrait of our future will look like cannot be known today, but we need to be able to see the outline in order to choose the right colors to complete the picture.

Before I draw an outline of the future I envision, I want to spend a few minutes expressing to you my gratitude for this honor you have given me, and for making me part of your `ohana.

My very first view of Hawai`i occurred late in the evening more than 30 years ago as my plane approached the Honolulu International Airport. It was the exact scene that Keola and Kapono Beamer sang of in *Honolulu City Lights*.

That first impression was laced with the gentle fragrance of plumeria lei that seemed to envelop the airport in those days. I got my first daylight view the next morning glancing out from an Ala Wai high rise.

Those early first impressions were like most first impressions—not the whole picture.

The view, although magnificent, was a superficial one that allowed me to see and smell the beauty of Hawai`i but not yet feel the deeper beauty of a place unlike any other that would only be revealed to me over time.

This deeper beauty would be revealed in the people I would come to know—the family I would live with on Moloka`i, the Maui family I would spend holidays with in Kula, and the family from Kaneohe that spends holidays with me.

I also came to know and love this one-of-a-kind community when I watched thousands of people turn out to donate bone marrow to a little girl who was dying or blood to a police officer they had never met before.

And this compassionate spirit is seen vividly today when people of every racial, ethnic, religious and economic background give their money and time to help families who have nowhere to go and nothing to eat.

How could I have ever imagined on that warm summer night more than 30 years ago that such beautiful and unique people would one day bestow on me their highest honor?

It is more humbling and overwhelming than I can express to you in words.

Today's inauguration represents a decision by the people of Hawai`i that our administration has performed well enough to have earned another chance to lead and to serve.

The people once again voted to entrust us with billions of dollars, their safety and security, the hopes and dreams of their families, and with Hawai`i's future.

I accept this responsibility willingly and enthusiastically, with a deep seriousness of purpose and an obligation to each of you and to future generations.

The election occurred nearly a month ago. The next session of the legislature will begin in about six weeks. The transition from a hard-fought campaign to the business of governing is not easy or painless, but it is essential.

Most of the post-campaign media coverage has described the election in terms of how many and which seats the political parties won or lost, what was the margin of victory in various races, and there were even stories about what the election really means in terms of future elections.

I would describe the election as a mandate from the public for both me and the legislature.

That mandate is to work together to solve the state's problems, take advantage of the opportunities arrayed before us, and preserve all that is special about Hawai'i.

That is our true mandate!

And the public wants this mandate carried out in a fiscally responsible manner that provides tax relief, maintains a cushion big enough to respond to unforeseen events, and does not overburden future generations with large amounts of debt.

It may not be the natural inclination of politicians from different parties to work together, and there will always be some who feel working cooperatively is helping the other side, nonetheless, this is what the people want.

And their message could not be clearer.

Elections are about candidates and competing philosophies, governing is about helping the public achieve its hopes and dreams for the future.

While it's true that not everyone's dreams are exactly alike, I believe a majority of us do share certain common hopes for the future and a vision of what our Hawai'i of tomorrow might look like.

I want to put into words what I believe Hawai'i's destiny is in this world.

I believe we are meant to serve as a one-of-a-kind, American-Pacific-Asian model that shows others how an ever-changing and diverse society can succeed in the global economy while honoring its multi-ethnic heritage.

Is it really possible to paddle at the speed necessary to catch global economic waves without losing the essence of who we are?

I believe it is possible, and I believe it is imperative.

The magnitude and speed of change and innovation in the world today is so great, that if we fail to move forward, by definition, we will be going backwards.

When it comes to global economic waves, we want to be riding them not sitting on the sand watching others ride.

But we must catch these global waves in a way that honors our past and respects our values because to do otherwise will bring us at the end of our ride to a shore we no longer recognize or feel welcomed at.

Only the truly naïve would believe that changing rapidly while preserving our essence will be easy, but the people of Hawai`i are definitely up to task and I am personally energized by the challenge.

Above all we want a Hawai`i that maintains its well-deserved reputation as a place where everyone is welcome regardless of racial, ethnic, religious or economic background.

We aren't a place that tolerates diversity; we celebrate it. And all we ask in return is that our people and our ways be respected.

We have an obvious and unique opportunity in the coming years to become America's vanguard in the Asia-Pacific region at the exact time the rest of the world is recognizing the importance of what is truly our part of the world.

There have been countless articles written about Asia's growing world prominence. The phrase, "The Asian Century" produces 183,000 listings on the Google search engine.

I agree with those who believe that the century we are now living in will indeed prove to be the Asian Century, but it will also be the Hawai`i Century.

It is our natural comfort with diverse peoples and our historic and cultural ties in this part of the world that make us such an important asset to our country as the federal government searches for its place in the Asian Century.

I want to spend time pressing this point both in Washington and here at home in the coming years because Hawai`i is the only natural bridge between these two very different and important cultures.

This truly must be our destiny.

I will be working much more closely with the East-West Center in the years ahead and with the other Asia-Pacific focused organizations in our state.

Already we are one of only two states in America with a travel and trade office in Beijing; we have signed significant economic, educational and cultural agreements with several Asian countries; Hawai`i has developed over many years the kind of personal relationships that matter in this part of the world, and we maintain an active trade mission schedule.

Even our Hawai`i National Guard is playing a role in international affairs in the region both through humanitarian efforts and joint military exercises.

In the coming years, we want to assure that our university develops the kinds of programs that are increasingly recognized internationally.

We must be willing on a consistent basis to allocate the resources this requires and to recognize the broader role a thriving university system plays in our cultural, social and economic future.

This increased focus on international outreach is vitally important to our future economic growth, and integral to efforts to diversify our economy.

At the same time we are focusing far beyond our shores, here at home we need to ensure that the land and water needed for successful farming and ranching are preserved and protected, and that a rural lifestyle remains an option for those seeking a slower pace of life.

Unlike the earlier economic power of plantation agriculture, the agriculture of tomorrow will be a somewhat less important component of a more diverse economy but a much more important part of our food and energy security.

Maintaining our overall physical security requires us to continue our progress of minimizing criminal activity in our neighborhoods while constantly improving our ability to respond to natural disasters and other emergencies.

Also included in our shared vision for the future is an assurance that there will always be a place here at home for our young people when they are ready to build their own lives, and that they will be a part of finding solutions to the challenges that lie ahead.

Our cultural heritage includes a deep respect for our elders. Those who toiled throughout their working lives without complaint in order to create our modern Hawai`i deserve to live the rest of their lives with dignity.

We have an obligation to them that we must meet.

Likewise, we have an obligation to those who are temporarily in need of extra help, as well as those who can never live completely independent lives—the homeless, the severely mentally ill and those who are physically disabled.

This is an obligation we must meet as well.

The only major part of the outline of our future that remains unfinished concerns land—how we will utilize it and what role it will play in our economy and in our lives.

Historically, land in Hawai`i has been a source of wealth for many—it was the foundation, along with water, of the plantation agriculture economy, it is a necessary base for the visitor industry, and in recent decades it has become a commodity that is bought and sold at ever higher prices.

But land also represents the chance for a family to own its own home, and a place to experience the beauty and serenity of nature.

Land is a necessary ingredient in the training of our nation’s military, and an essential part of our food and energy security.

And it is the very core of the Native Hawaiian people, who will not survive separated from this land.

Continuing to base our economy and our future on land development is foolhardy because land is finite, and because land development often causes deep rifts in our island community, a community that depends so heavily on harmony among our people.

These rifts will become more frequent and intense over time as the amount of developable land diminishes.

Because we have based our economy on land development for so long, because even average citizens see buying and selling real estate as the only path to financial security, and because we have somehow survived the bitter public debates over land development projects, the natural inclination for many is to keep doing what we have been doing.

But this would be a very unwise path for us to follow.

We will never catch today's global economic waves by developing land.

Instead we need to begin focusing on human development—the kind of development that recognizes our future economic success depends upon innovation and new ideas, of which there is an unlimited supply.

I'm talking about the kind of new ideas that change lives and can change the world—new ways of creating energy, new ways of reducing pollution, new ways of growing food, new ways of creating clean drinking water, new ways of identifying and curing diseases, new ways of viewing the solar system, new ways of preserving and utilizing our ocean resources.

In my State of the State Address in late January I will talk in greater detail and offer specific proposals to reposition our economy from one that creates wealth through the buying and selling of land to one that creates wealth through innovation and new ideas.

I will humbly ask the legislature to work with me in a spirit of cooperation in order to meet what I view as our state's greatest challenge in the coming years—a true restructuring of our economy.

I've been talking today about global economic waves because how we ride those waves will be so important in determining the quality of life that future generations in Hawai'i will enjoy.

As I conclude today, I want also to mention our own Hawai'i waves and all that they represent—the kind of waves that Duke Kahanamoku rode, the kind teenagers catch on the weekend and businessmen paddle out on before work.

Neither ocean waves nor economic waves are easy to catch, but with determination and hard work, we can learn to stand up on both kinds of waves.

And by working together and making good decisions, both kinds of waves will bring us to a shore we love and appreciate.

Hawai`i must always remain a place where surfing and other aspects of our unique lifestyle are respected and perpetuated.

We are a people unlike any other.

We are just as comfortable celebrating the Filipino Centennial, King Kamehameha Day and the Chinese New Year as we are commemorating the Fourth of July and Veterans' Day.

We enjoy Hawaiian music and we dance hula.

We cook food underground.

We call adults "Auntie" and "Uncle" out of respect.

We eat sashimi and pound mochi on New Year's Day.

We laugh out loud at local comedians who poke fun at our different ethnic groups.

We wear rubber slippers and take our shoes off before going into the house.

And we turn out 25,000 strong to watch a high school football game.

These are just a few of the many things that define us as a people, and they make us the envy of much of the world.

We don't have to change who we are in order to prosper in the coming years, but we do have to change.

I look forward to working with you in the coming years to bring about our shared vision for this very special land that we love.

Mahalo.